

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6818

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2053

EXDIS

FOR EUR MR. ARMITAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, CZ, US

SUBJECT: SIGNING OF CLAIMS AGREEMENT AND POSSIBLE VISIT
BY CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN MINISTER

1. HEAD OF SIXTH DEPARTMENT, ZANTOVSKY, CALLED CHARGE IN AUGUST 23 TO DISCUSS SIGNING OF US-CZECHOSLOVAK CLAIMS AGREEMENT AND POSSIBLE INVITATION TO FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK TO VISIT US FOR SIGNING.

2. ZJKOTVSKY HAD RETURNED FROM VACATION EARLY, AND THERE WAS SOME IMPLICATION THAT HE HAD RETURNED AT LEAST PARTLY TO WORK ON THIS QUESTION. HE SAID CHNOUPEK (WHO IS STILL ON VACATION) HAD TELEPHONED HIM TO ASK IF THERE WAS ANY NEWS AND TO DISCUSS CHNOUPEK'S AUTUMN SCHEDULE. ZANTOVSKY SAID IT WAS TIME THAT CONTINGENCY PLANS HAD TO BE DRAWN UP WITHOUT DELAY, AND HE ASKED EMBASSY'S URGENT ASSISTANCE IN FINDING OUT WHAT WE COULD ABOUT THE OUTLOOK. HE SPOKE AGAIN OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AGREEMENT FROM THE CZECH VIEWPOINT, AND SAID IF THEY WERE PUSHING AGAINST CLOSED DOOR, THEY WOULD WAIT; BUT IF THEY WERE PUSHING AGAINST OPEN DOOR, THEY WANTED TO OPEN IT MORE.

3. ZANTOVSKY CONTINUED THAT IF INVITATION WERE CONTEMPLATED, SECOND HALF OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER MIGHT BE BEST TIME, ALTHOUGH ANY TIME IN OCTOBER AFTER ABOUT OCTOBER 6 PROBABLY WOULD BE
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POSSIBLE. AS CONVERSATION DEVELOPED, IT APPEARED THAT

ZANTOVSKY WAS CONCERNED ABOUT VISIT COMING IN MIDDLE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, AND WONDERED IF THERE MIGHT BE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES IN NOVEMBER DATE.

4. CHARGE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON. HE ADDED THAT HE HOPED THAT POSSIBILITY OF CHNOUPEK VISIT WAS BEING GIVEN VERY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IN DEPARTMENT. DATES MENTIONED SO FAR HAD BEEN EARLIER THAN NOVEMBER, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE. CHARGE SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND ZANTOVSKY'S POINT ABOUT NOT SCHEDULING ANYTHING IN MIDDLE OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN, BUT HE DID NOT THINK THIS WOULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE PROPOSED VISIT.

5. CHARGE MENTIONED ADDITIONAL FACTOR IN SCHEDULING, NAMELY THAT PRESIDENT OF CZECHOSLOVAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LUDVIK CERNY WAS PLANNING VISIT TO US IN OCTOBER TO SIGN INTER-CHAMBER AGREEMENT INITIALED BY US CHAMBER BOARD CHAIRMAN CHARLES H. SMITH, JR. DURING HIS VISIT HERE IN JUNE 1974. CHARGE SAID THAT DURING HIS RECENT COURTESY CALL ON CERNY, CERNY HAD SPOKEN OF FORTHCOMING TRIP AND OF HIS HOPE THAT DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE JARASLAV JAKUBEC (WHO IS ASSUMING FUNCTIONS OF DEPUTY MINISTER PETER ON SEPTEMBER 1) WOULD BE PRESENT FOR SIGNING OF INTER-CHAMBER AGREEMENT. ZANTOVSKY SAID THIS VISIT WOULD HAVE TO BE PHASED PROPERLY WITH PUTATIVE VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER, AND HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT. HE SAID IT COULD LOGICALLY COME BEFORE OR AFTER CHNOUPEK VISIT, BUT HE TENDED TO THINK AFTERWARD WOULD BE MORE USEFUL.

6. CHARGE EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION THAT HE HAD NOT INSTRUCTIONS AND COULD OFFER NO ASSURANCES OF ANY SORT ABOUT PROPOSED VISIT. ZANTOVSKY UNDERSTOOD THIS STIPULATION, BUT URGED THAT DEPARTMENT BE TOLD OF URGENT NEED TO SET SCHEDULES.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT AMBASSADOR HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS PROPOSED VISIT DURING HIS STOPOVER IN WASHINGTON AUGUST 2. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND FULLY THAT COMING TO GRIPS WITH SECRETARY'S FALL SCHEDULE, PARTICULARLY WITH OTHER EAST EUROPEAN VISITS IN THE WORKS, MUST
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BE A TOUGH WRESTLING MATCH. WE ARE OF COURSE SYMPATHETIC TO CZECHOSLOVAK DESIRE FOR FOREIGN MINISTER TO BE INVITED, AS THE AMBASSADOR HAS PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED; AND WE PERCEIVE THAT CHNOUPEK IS ANXIOUS ABOUT GETTING THINGS FIRMLY ARRANGED. WE PASS ALONG ZANTOVSKY'S PLEA WITH THE SOFTLY SPOKEN REQUEST THAT YOU TRY TO SEND US INSTRUCTIONS AS EARLY ON AS YOU CAN.
PERRY

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